



Muhlenberg College/*Morning Call*

Lehigh Valley Resident Survey

October 2019

KEY FINDINGS

1. Lehigh Valley residents maintain fairly mixed views on the City of Allentown. While a large majority (73%) indicate that redevelopment efforts have had a positive effect on the city, a plurality of local residents think life in the region's largest city is getting worse (37%).
2. Residents of Lehigh and Northampton Counties were most likely to identify crime as the most important issue facing Allentown with 1 out of 3 survey respondents identifying this issue.
3. Nearly 4 in 10 Lehigh Valley Residents report that they go to downtown Allentown once a month or more.
4. Over 4 in 10 local residents report that they go to the PPL Center in downtown Allentown at least once a year.
5. A majority (57%) of Lehigh Valley residents indicated they were either closely or somewhat closely following the shooting incidents in the city during the summer of 2019.
6. Almost half (45%) of survey respondents identified gangs as the primary cause of the shootings in Allentown last summer.

METHODOLOGY

This key findings report summarizes data collected in a telephone survey of residents of the Lehigh Valley between October 1 and 14, 2019. Individual households throughout Lehigh and Northampton counties were selected randomly for inclusion in the study. Interviews were conducted by the staff of the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion, with 415 surveys completed (309 cell and 106 landlines). This number of completions results in a margin of error of +/- 5.5% at the 95% confidence interval. However the margin of errors for sub groups (i.e. women, college educated, parents, etc.)

and select questions is larger due to smaller sample size. Data from the survey was weighted to population parameters provided by the United States Census Bureau for: gender; age; and race. Percentages throughout the survey have been rounded upward at the .5 mark, thus many totals in the results will not equal 100%. The survey questionnaire, found in its entirety in the following report, was designed by Dr. Christopher Borick of the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion in consultation with staff members of the *Morning Call*. Analysis and report writing was completed by the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion under the direction of Dr. Borick.

INSTRUMENT AND FREQUENCIES

Q1: Thank you. Which of the following counties do you currently reside in? (READ LIST)

1. Lehigh.....56%
2. Northampton.....44%

Q2: Overall, how would you rate the Lehigh Valley as a place to live? Would you say it's an excellent, good, not so good, or poor place to live?

1. Excellent.....26%
2. Good.....59%
3. Not So Good11%
4. Poor..... 4%
98. Not Sure (Volunteered)..... 1%

Q3: In general, would you say that life in the Lehigh Valley is getting better or getting worse?

1. Getting Better.....39%
2. Getting Worse.....26%
3. Staying the Same (Volunteered).....29%
98. Not Sure (Volunteered)..... 6%

Q4: Next I have a few questions more specifically about the City of Allentown. Compared to TEN years ago would you say life in Allentown has become a better or worse?

- 1 Better.....29%
2. Worse.....37%
3. Staying the Same (Volunteered).....14%
98. Not Sure (Volunteered)..... 20%

Q5: What would you say is the most important issue facing the City of Allentown today?
(OPEN ENDED)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Crime..... | 33% |
| 2. Violence..... | 8% |
| 3. Drugs..... | 8% |
| 4. Housing..... | 5% |
| 5. Development Issues..... | 5% |
| 6. Education..... | 4% |
| 7. Gangs..... | 4% |
| 8. Traffic..... | 4% |
| 9. Political Culture/Corruption.. | 4% |
| 10. Poverty..... | 3% |
| 11. Race Issues..... | 2% |
| 12. Taxes..... | 2% |
| 13. Other..... | 4% |
| 98. Not Sure..... | 13% |

Q6: During the last decade there has been a redevelopment effort in downtown Allentown that included the construction of the PPL center, new restaurants, retail and housing options. Would you say these redevelopment efforts have had a very positive, somewhat positive, somewhat negative, very negative or no real impact on downtown Allentown?

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| 1. Very Positive..... | 27% |
| 2. Somewhat Positive..... | 46% |
| 3. Somewhat Negative..... | 7% |
| 4. Very Negative..... | 2% |
| 5. No Real Impact..... | 8% |
| 98 Not Sure (Vol)..... | 10% |

Q7: Do you think the redevelopment efforts in downtown Allentown have had a very positive, somewhat positive, somewhat negative, very negative or no real impact on the areas of Allentown OUTSIDE of the downtown area itself? Very Positive

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| 1. Very Positive..... | 8% |
| 2. Somewhat Positive..... | 35% |
| 3. Somewhat Negative..... | 13% |
| 4. Very Negative..... | 7% |
| 5. No Real Impact..... | 24% |
| 98. Not Sure (Vol)..... | 13% |

Q8: How often do you go to Downtown Allentown for purposes other than work related activities? At least once a week, about once a month, a few times a year, every couple of years or never?

- 1. at least once a week (SKIP TO Q6)..... 16%
- 2. about once a month(SKIP TO Q6).....24%
- 3. a few times a year(SKIP TO Q6)..... 32%
- 4. every couple of years (SKIP TO Q6)..... 8%
- 5. never.....18%
- 6. other (VOL) (SKIP TO Q6)..... 1%
- 98 .not sure (VOL) (SKIP TO Q6)..... 1%

Q9: What is your primary reason for never going to downtown Allentown? (Open Ended)

- 1. No reason/need.....45%
- 2. Barriers to travel..... 23%
- 3. Concern with crime..... 11%
- 4. Condition of city..... 6%
- 5. Traffic..... 3%
- 6. Other..... 4%
- 98. Not Sure..... 9%

Q10: Compared to the period before the redevelopment of Downtown Allentown that included the construction of the PPL center, new restaurants and retail options, do you visit Downtown Allentown much more often, a little more often, a little less often, much less often or about the same?

- 1. Much more often..... 9%
- 2. A little more often..... 17%
- 3. A little less often..... 9%
- 4. Much less often.....22%
- 5. About the same.....34%
- 98. Not Sure (VOL)..... 9%

Q11: Which of the following activities in downtown Allentown have you engaged in during the last year? Attended a sporting event at the PPL Center

- 1. Yes.....38%
- 2. No..... 62%
- 98. Not Sure.....<1%

Q12: Attended a concert or other non-sporting event at the PPL Center.

- 1. Yes.....39%
- 2. No.....61%
- 98.. Not Sure.....<1%

Q13: Ate dinner or had drinks at a restaurant in Downtown Allentown.

- 1. Yes.....56%
- 2. No.....44%

Q14: Attended a festival or special event in Downtown Allentown.

- 1. Yes.....27%
- 2. No.....71%
- 98. Not Sure..... 1%

Q15: Visited friends that live in Downtown Allentown.

- 1. Yes.....23%
- 2. No.....77%

Q16: How often do you visit the PPL Center?

- 1. Multiple times a year.....23%
- 2. About once a year.....21%
- 3. Every couple of years.....15%
- 4. Or I never visit the PPL Center.....40%
- 98. Not sure..... 1%

Q17: Which factor is the primary reason you have not attended events at the PPL Center?

Is it: (READ LIST) (N=164) (ONLY THOSE THAT ANSWERED IN Q16)

- 1. Lack of interest in the games and events at the arena.....46%.
- 2. Concern about finding parking in the arena area 7%
- 3. Concern about crime in the arena area..... 10%
- 4. The cost of attending games and events at the arena..... 13%
- 5. or another reason..... 24%
- 98. not sure..... <1%

Q18. Which of the following best describes your opinion on the effect of downtown development on crime in downtown Allentown. Has development:

- 1. Significantly decreased crime..... 4%
- 2. Moderately decreased crime.....24%
- 3. Moderately increased crime.....18%
- 4. Significantly increased crime..... 5%
- 5. or had no significant effect on crime.....28%
- 98. not sure (Vol).....22%

Q19: When in Allentown, how concerned are you with becoming a victim of a crime?

- 1. Very Concerned.....15%
- 2. Somewhat Concerned.....28%
- 3. Not Too Concerned.....24%
- 4. Not at all Concerned.....25%
- 5. Never go to Allentown (Volunteered)..... 6%
- 98. Not sure..... 2%

Q20: How closely have you followed news of shootings in Allentown this summer?

- 1. Very closely..... 25%
- 2. Somewhat closely..... 32%
- 3. A little bit..... 26%
- 4. Not at all.....15%
- 98. Not Sure..... 2%

Q21: Have the shootings made you less likely to visit downtown Allentown?

- 1. Yes..... 37%
- 2. No..... 59%
- 98. Not sure..... 4%

Q22: How many people do you think have been shot in Allentown this summer?

- 1. zero to 10.....21%
- 2. 11-20.....34%
- 3. 21-30.....26%
- 4. more than 30..... 2%
- 98. not sure.....17%

Q23; Now thinking about the shootings in Allentown during the last year which of the following factors do you think has been MOST responsible for the shooting incidents? (READ LIST).

1. Guns.....20%
2. Inadequate policing..... 3%
3. Gangs.....45%
4. Mental health issues..... 9%
5. Video games..... 1%
6. Or an other factor.....15%
98. Not sure..... 7%

Q24. Finally, I have a few questions about yourself. First, what is your current marital status?

1. Single.....30%
2. Married.....53%
3. Separated..... 2%
4. Divorced..... 8%
5. Widowed..... 5%
6. Partnered..... 2%

Q25. What is your highest level of education? Is it (READ LIST)?

1. Less than High School..... 2%
2. High School graduate.....29%
3. Some college or technical school 27%
4. College graduate (4 yr only).....27%
5. Graduate or professional degree.....16%

Q26. Which of the following categories best describes your racial identity? (READ LIST)

1. White/Caucasian.....69%
2. African-American..... 8%
3. Hispanic.....13%
4. Latino..... 4%
5. Asian.....1%
6. Native American.....<1%
7. Mixed race..... 4%
8. or other..... 2%
98. Not Sure (Volunteered).....<1%

Q27. What is your zip code? _____

Q28. Which of the following categories best describes your family income? (READ LIST)

1. Under \$20,000..... 8%
2. \$20,000-\$40,000.....20%
3. \$40,000-\$60,000.....19%
4. \$60,000-\$80,000.....18%
5. \$80,000-\$100,000.....15%
6. Over \$100,000.....18%
98. Not sure (Volunteered)..... 3%

Q29. How many children do you have under 18? (CODED INTO CATEGORIES)

- None.....68%
- 1-2.....25%
- Over 2..... 7%

Q30: In which of the following age categories does your current age fall. READ LIST _____

1. 18-29.....20%
2. 30-49.....32%
3. 50-65.....24%
4. or Over 65.....22%

Q31 Finally to which gender identity do you most identify? (READ LIST)

1. Male.....49%
2. Female.....51%
3. Or another category besides Male or Female.....<1%